North Village Plans Taking Shape
University's initial residential complex will open in 2004

Campus Living & Learning and the School of Engineering and Computer Science have announced a partnership to establish North Village, Baylor's initial living-learning center and the University's first residential facility to be constructed in 40 years.

Scheduled to open in August 2004, approximately 180 spaces of the 600-bed North Village residential complex will be reserved for engineering and computer science students, who must apply and be admitted to the facility. The students will live in North Village and will take at least one course each semester with other students participating in the program. The School of Engineering and Computer Science will hire a full-time staff person to direct the program and work with Campus Living & Learning in day-to-day coordination.

The other 420 beds in North Village will be available for sophomores and up from other academic disciplines.

The 212,000-square-foot facility will be built between the DeJong Office of Engineering and Computer Science Building. North Village is the first of four projected residential villages to be built over the next decade to address the second imperative of Baylor 2012 — “to build a truly residential campus.”

Groundbreaking on North Village will be held in late spring 2005. — Lori Scott Fogleman
A NEW WAY TO LIVE

Baylor's North Village heralds a change in campus housing

By Barbara Elmore

Dr. Frank Shushok Jr., associate dean of Campus Living & Learning (left), and Dr. Benjamin S. Kelley, dean of the School of Engineering and Computer Science, believe the North Village will benefit students.
It's been more than 40 years since Baylor completed construction on a new campus residence hall, but soon the University will be sending out 600 student invitations to a long-term sleepover to begin when the North Village Residential Community opens in 2004.

Baylor plans to keep sending similar mass invitations through 2010, following an ambitious schedule of opening three new residential villages between 2004 and 2010. By then, the University will boast 1,800 new beds on campus and require more students — all freshmen and perhaps sophomores — to live in campus housing.

But such a requirement may not be necessary, given the thoughtful, attractive plans for the first model. Dr. Frank Shushok Jr., associate dean of Campus Living & Learning, discovered that students are eager to live in the shadows of Pat Neff Hall if given a good reason to do so.

"It surprised us how willing students are to move back to campus if we provide a product that's interesting and more than meets minimum expectations," he said.

**Meeting the Vision**

The University's interest in residential villages, or living-learning partnerships, is tied to Baylor 2012, the 10-year Vision. The plan's second imperative expresses the desire for a truly residential campus.

"The heart of the Baylor experience rests in the communio of ideas, experiences, and relationships on campus," Dr. Shushok said.

But saying that North Village will provide the campus with 600 new beds is a bit like noting your new luxury car comes with four good tires. It's the advantages beyond providing for basic housing needs that are most impressive.

The operational word is not "beds" but "village." If you think of all the things you might do in a village — attend seminars, pray in a chapel, discuss ideas, shop, cook, have coffee with friends, work on projects with others of like mind, go to class, park your car and, of course, turn in for the night — you begin to catch the vision of what Baylor is building.

**ECS partnership**

Designed to foster a "seamless learning environment," North Village will offer 180 of its 600 new beds to students in the School of Engineering and Computer Science. The rest will go to upperclassmen of any major. Students and their parents are already interested.

"We have had inquiries," said Dr. Benjamin S. Kelley, dean of the School of Engineering and Computer Science. News of the village got out quickly, he said, because students are members of a nine-member planning group called the Steering Committee for the ECS Living-Learning Center. Baylor will break ground for the building May 16, and the complex will open for residents by fall 2004.

The School of Engineering and Computer Science is an eager and natural partner for the fine learning-living center. Dr. Kelley's enthusiasm for the project...
was a big selling point in making his school a partner, Dr. Shushok said. It also seemed a natural fit since North Village will rise next door to the Rogers Engineering and Computer Science Building.

Dr. Shushok said officials from the school have attended the steering committee’s meetings every other week.

“That was quite a time commitment for the dean and faculty members,” he said.

**Advantageous residence**

Dr. Kelley’s excitement stems from advantages the complex will give his students outside the classroom as well as inside.

“The most minimal thing we could have done was house students together there. This is far beyond that,” he said. “We know that if students in rigorous majors are together they will do better because they have a support group. This unit will take ideas from the classroom and into the living-learning center so that it’s much more than clustering students in a common living area.”

Dr. Kelley envisions special activities that “bring learning from classroom into living space.” One example might be when a distinguished scholar visits Baylor as a seminar speaker.

“That evening, he might wander over to the living-learning center and have an impromptu discussion with a group of students who happen to gather,” Dr. Kelley said.

It’s hoped that the North Village experience will encourage informal student gatherings and create teamwork and leadership skills because classmates will have the space to work together. Private living quarters will be under the same roof, but with separate wings for men and women.

To increase student-faculty contact within the center, planners included two offices in the new building for faculty of the School of Engineering and Computer Science.

Dr. Shushok and other planners know that not all Baylor students will want this kind of living arrangement, but they hope most will. Their goal is to have half of Baylor undergraduates living on campus by 2012.

Dr. Kelley expects the North Village to have a higher percentage of freshmen the first year it’s open than in following years.

“The tradition of Baylor is that when you reach your sophomore year, you move off campus,” he said. “As this (village concept) develops, we see them staying on campus, so the percentage of freshmen will go down.”

**Retention benefits**

Dr. Shushok said one of the main reasons to house more students on campus is to bind them to each other and to the University so they will remain at Baylor until graduation.

“The research is not fuzzy. It’s quite clear that students who live on campus are more connected, more loyal, and retain better,” he said. “Part of any community is being present.”

Dr. Shushok points to figures that say college students are 43 percent more likely to graduate from an institution if they live on-campus their freshman year. Why?

“They are surrounded by people they get to know well, by an environment that tells them they belong to something,” he said. Add activities they get to attend on campus and with people who have similar interests, and they identify with the University.

On the other hand, a student’s circle of friends shrinks when he moves off campus. This is something Dr. Shushok knows all too well, having lived on campus only one year during his undergraduate career.

“I was very much the Baylor norm,” he said, describing his life at Brooks Hall as a bit isolated. “I could have easily been one of those retention casualties had I not gotten involved in activities and met people.”

After graduating from Baylor with degrees in history and education, Dr. Shushok earned a master’s degree in higher education and student affairs at Ohio State University. His doctorate in higher education policy analysis comes from the University of Maryland at College Park. The latter universities provided models for Baylor’s new villages, he said.

Although he had not anticipated returning to Baylor, Dr. Shushok was compelled by the vision of creating a completely residential environment. He returned in August 2001.

The new thrust toward making the campus an inviting living space will not ignore traditional residence halls. Dr. Shushok said. Planners want to make sure Baylor residence halls are conducive to learning, where people are engaged and understand the connection to being part of an institution of higher learning. That means faculty will visit residence halls to meet and eat with students. Career counselors will offer services within hall space.

**New style directors**

These changes mean Baylor will look for new kinds of residence hall directors, individuals with master’s degrees in higher education administration, ministry or counseling. They will interact with students and be resources for academic problems. A student not registered for an upcoming semester might find her residence hall director asking why, for example.

As Baylor continues to envision its future campus, the steering committee and other planners are discussing what groups might mix the best in later villages. Discussions have included the entrepreneur program in the business school, a leadership center with a service emphasis, and a residence with a foreign missions-international politics focus, to name only a few. Careful planning is the key.

“Partnerships aren’t trivial,” Dr. Shushok said. “They are true marriages. We’re developing a program designed to produce the best outcomes for students in those programs, not just putting people together who have like majors.”

The End
President Robert B. Sloan, Jr.
and the
Baylor University Board of Regents
invite you to attend the

Groundbreaking Ceremony
for
NORTH VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

Friday, May 16, 2003
2:00 p.m.

1205 M.L. Cooper Drive
at the construction site adjacent to the new
Dutton Avenue Office and Parking Facility and
Rogers Engineering and Computer Science Building
Baylor University

Reception immediately following

R.s.v.p. by May 9
Card enclosed or call (254) 710-8857